

Turn that frown upside down - a smiling meditation

Welcome to the RelationKit mindfulness series. Today we're going to practice a smiling meditation, to cheer us up a little, inviting a more sunny, cheerful, positive mindset. You can do this on your own or with your child too.

Finding a comfy position now, sitting or lying, and gently close your eyes if that feels okay. Feel your body resting into gravity and begin to feel the seat or the ground beneath you, holding you in this moment. Maybe you can feel the touch of the earth through your feet. If you are sitting your spine is straight but relaxed, and if it is helpful, you can roll your shoulders or gently move your head from side to side to loosen up a little.

And then smile gently to yourself. You're not doing anything strange or weird here, you're just letting a gentle smile arrive upon your lips for the purpose of this practice.

Let your lips feel soft and smooth as they spread to the side, just lifting the edges of your mouth a little - nothing too forced – just so that it has an effect of softening your jaw and the skin on your face. It softens your facial expression, and any tension there melts away.

Breathe fully and deeply, feeling your body breathing in and feeling your body breathing out. And whilst keeping this gentle smile upon your face, relax any areas of the body that may also be holding tense and tight, your shoulders perhaps, or maybe your back. Softening there.

And now bring your attention to the space between your eyebrows, softening here as well. Let a sense of a smile sweep across your brow now, and into your eyes, so that you're smiling with your eyes. And on the flow of your next out-breath bring your attention down to your heart, and allow this smile to flow through your heart now as you think of all those people or things in your life that bring you joy and happiness.

Imagine this smiling, warm-like energy moving throughout your entire body now. It comforts and heals your muscles and all of your internal organs. Take your time in feeling this. See this smile flowing through you. Imagine each vital organ being soothed by this smiling, warm energy. Imagine that your whole body were smiling now.

Notice the feelings in your body. Maybe you feel warm, awake, content, at peace. Allow this inner smile to travel where it wants to go in each moment - maybe to a part of you that needs this loving smile right now - or send it into any place that your feeling discomfort or pain, and feel the healing effect that a simple smile can have on your body.

Continue to imagine the warm and healing sense of this inner smile within your body. Letting it just stay wherever it wishes to be for a few moments, and then to travel to anywhere that has been missed. Let this smiling energy wash over and through your entire body now. Imagine this warm, smiling energy spreading throughout your entire being.

And now imagine a smiling face in front of you - it could be your smiling face or the face of your child - just let that face naturally come to you. If more than one face comes,

remember you can choose someone else's face next time you practice this meditation. Begin to draw in this smile and the happy energy it gifts to you, draw it into this space of you now, and hold those positive feelings inside.

Feel the warmth and positive energy from this smile begin to bathe your entire body, just like the sunshine. You might like to picture this smile surrounded by warm yellow or golden light. And this light warms you on the inside as the smile moves through your body, and then if you wish, sending it gently outwards into the world. You are sending your warmth and positivity out into the world now.

As you begin to bring this meditation to a close, spend a moment in taking this feeling of peace and contentment into your body, if you wish by placing your hands over your heart. Breathe some more deep breaths here, and just relax into that feeling.

Now gently and kindly bring your awareness back to your natural breath and to your body sitting or lying here, and smile.

Take this smiling energy with you throughout your day, offering it to all those around you.

When you're ready, gently blink your eyes open if they've been closed.

See you next time.